B. Discussion of related references in numerical order:

The patent to Ofek et al. (6,356,977 B2), assigned to EMC Corporation, provides for a *System and Method for On-Line, Real Time, Data Migration.* Second data storage subsystem **16** is connected to host computer **12** by means of data communication path **28**, and is also connected to first data storage system **14** by data communication paths **20a, 20b**. Data input/output requests from the host are received by the second data storage system. Second data storage system **16** uses data map/table **24** to determine whether the requested data is located locally or on first data storage system **14**. If the requested data is not stored locally, second data storage system **16** issues a read data request to the first data storage system **14**. The first data storage system returns the requested data to the second storage system, which then provides the data to host **12** (see column 5, line 3 – column 6, line 51).

The patent application publication to Okumoto et al. (2003/0204683 A1), assigned to Hitachi, Ltd., provides for a *Method, System, and Storage Controller for Controlling Shared Memories.* Disk array devices **50**, having storage controllers **51**, are provided with input/output interfaces for connecting with host device **20**. Each storage controller is provided with cache memory **52**, shared memory **53**, and storage devices **56**. Shared memories **53** of the storage controllers are interconnected by means of network **70**, including switching device **40**. An input/output request from the host, SCSI packet **60**, is provided with header section **61**, which indicates the source or destination storage controller **51**, and payload section **62**. The input/output request is received by one of the disk array devices and header **61** is examined. If the packet indicates that the request is directed to a storage device managed by another storage controller, a path is established by switching device **40** to the targeted storage controller and the request is executed through that path (see paragraphs 17-24).

The patent to Ohno et al. (2003/0221077 A1), assigned to Hitachi, Ltd., provides for a *Method for Controlling Storage System, and Storage Control Apparatus*. First storage control apparatus **10** is connected to host computer **30** by means of network **50**, and is also connected to second storage control apparatus **20** by means of network **51**. The first storage control apparatus receives data input/output requests from the host computer and determines if the requested data resides on first logic volume **11**, located within the first storage control apparatus, or on second logic volume **12** located within the second storage control device. In the event that the targeted data resides on the second logic volume, the first storage control apparatus generates an input/output request, corresponding to the request received from the host, and transmits this request to the second storage control device over network **51**. As seen from the host computer, there is no distinction between input/output requests belonging to the first storage control apparatus or the second storage control apparatus (see paragraphs 71-73 and 101).

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IV. SUMMARY

The provided references illustrate systems in which input/output requests from a host processor are handled by a storage system control that determines if the request is destined for an internal storage device or for a second storage device, located externally. If the requested data is located on the external storage, the storage system control generates a request corresponding to the received request and transmits it to the second storage device. This process is transparent to the host processor.

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